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13 JUN 1969

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller**

**THROUGH : Deputy Director for Support**

**SUBJECT : The National Interdepartmental Seminar**

**REFERENCE : Routing Slip remarks, O/Ex Dir to DD/S  
and DTR, dtd 27 May, re subj and memo  
from DD/P dtd 24 May**

1. This memorandum is in response to your request for information about our students' reactions and our commitment to the National Interdepartmental Seminar.

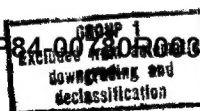
Summary of Student Reaction

2. Of a total of 122 CIA graduates of the Seminar in the past three years, 71 have submitted written critiques. The majority of these graduates found the Seminar a stimulating and broadening experience and a useful vehicle for the Agency (see attachment). Similar conclusions could also be drawn from oral comments of our students during the course.

3. Of these 71 officers, 65 found the Seminar of definite value and praised it with varying degrees of enthusiasm, whereas six found it of little or no value. Many of the 65 felt that they had gained better insights into the national policy process as well as greater awareness of the diversity and complexity of factors with which the United States must concern itself in the underdeveloped countries. In being exposed to the objectives as well as problems and concerns of the other major foreign affairs agencies, a number observed that the Seminar had lifted their sights above their own preoccupations and parochial concerns in the Agency and had served to focus their thinking on the broader problems of U.S. interests and foreign policy options. A number also commented on the Seminar

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as a forum for "de-mystifying" the Agency and promoting a better understanding of its role in the Government's foreign affairs community. Of the remaining six officers, two found the Seminar of no value ( [ ] and [ ] 43rd Session); one believed it had outlived its usefulness, although he found much in it of value ( [ ] 40th Session); three found it of little direct value to them, but did not go so far as to recommend its discontinuance ( [ ] 43rd Session; [ ] 36th Session).

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#### Background of Agency Commitment to NIS

4. With reference to the Agency's commitment, the Seminar was established by Presidential Directive in 1962, reaffirmed in 1964, and again in 1969 -- just prior to the change of Administrations. The latter reaffirmation grew out of the adoption by the Senior Interdepartmental Group on 23 May 1968 of the new Foreign Internal Defense Policy (FIDP) which replaced the old 1962 policy on this subject. Recognizing that the new policy would affect the Seminar's curriculum, the SIG directed the Interdepartmental Committee on Training to review the structure, goals, methods and content of the Seminar to ensure the assimilation in the training of the new policy's guidelines. As a result, the Seminar's content was substantially restructured to place greater emphasis on policy problems -- the analysis and definition of the process and consequences of peaceful and of revolutionary change in the underdeveloped countries in relation to the United States national interests. The SIG approved this revision, including the Seminar's reduction from four to three weeks, as well as the revised statement of training policy and objectives relating to foreign internal defense on 3 January 1969.

#### Current Status of NIS

5. With so many matters before it, the new Administration has yet to give consideration to either the FIDP or the NIS. In this regard, the Politico-Military Affairs Group of the Department of State has taken the only action in sending the FIDP, along with strong recommendations that it be reaffirmed, to the Review Group for study and referral to the National Security Council. The Review Group has yet to act on it. Meanwhile, officials in State, who have direct responsibility for administering the new policy, have indicated that they anticipate no difficulty in connection with the FIDP's reaffirmation. Indications regarding the probable status of the NIS have been reflected by Under Secretary Alexis Johnson, who stated that he regards the NIS as a desirable training program and that he favors its continuation. He made this statement at a meeting on 9 April

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1969 with Ambassador Hart, Director of the Foreign Service Institute, and Mr. Horowitz, Acting Coordinator of the NIS, which had been requested by Ambassador Hart to review ways of strengthening State's support of the Seminar. In the past, Under Secretary Johnson has given several presentations at the Seminar and has been a strong supporter of it.

#### Problems of Student Mix

6. There are many factors which can affect a particular Session of the NIS. The principal one is the experience-level and the inter-agency and assignment mix of the student body. When these factors are at the proper level and in good balance, the Session is almost invariably effective. When they are not, considerable unevenness in performance usually manifests itself, particularly in the different regional seminars (discussion groups). For example, in the 43rd Session the regional seminar for Africa had too few members (six -- 2 CIA, 1 State, 1 Army, 2 AID), whereas the regional seminar for Latin America had too many (32). In the 40th Session, there was an overall total of only 20 students; the Session, because of this, was conducted without any breakdown into regional seminars, although this approach was used with only moderate success. In the 36th Session, there were 10 members in the regional seminar for Africa, but five of them were from CIA, with a result our students ended up essentially talking among themselves. Since the NIS is interdepartmental and since there is no control that can be exercised by it over the assignment processes of the participating agencies, these are problems with which the Faculty must cope as effectively as possible, at least on the pedagogical level.

#### Future Direction

7. The Faculty and others concerned with the Seminar are continuing their efforts to improve the content and to sharpen the impact of the NIS. At the meeting referred to earlier, for example, Under Secretary Johnson suggested that consideration be given to conducting one week of the Seminar at an off-site location. This will be tried in the September Session at the Federal Executive Institute, Charlottesville, and if successful, it may be made a permanent feature of the NIS.

  
HUGH T. CUNNINGHAM  
Director of Training

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